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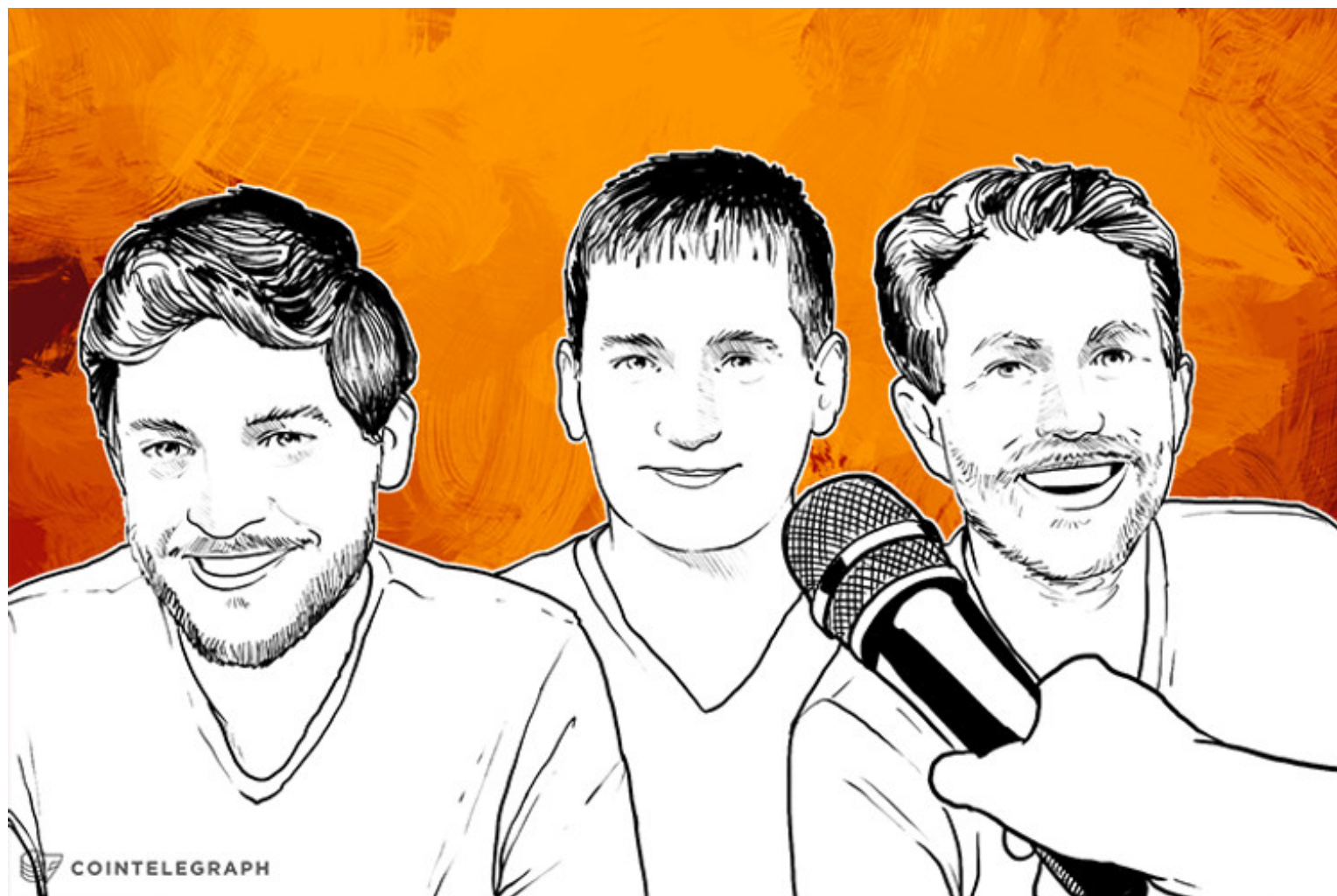
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OCT 30, 2015

LBRY: The Lovechild of Bitcoin, BitTorrent & Storj

Cointelegraph spoke to three of LBRY's team members to find out more about their software project.

2029



You've heard about [MaidSafe](#), Kim Dotcom's [MegaNet](#), and maybe even [IPFS](#). In this yet-to-launch race to "decentralize the web," these early-stage players now have a new contender: [LBRY](#).

As [web censorship problems continue](#), the effort to replace HTTP's client-server protocol with a superior peer-to-peer (P2P) content retrieval system is growing. What if a protocol had the monetary incentives of Bitcoin, the file sharing abilities of BitTorrent, and the storage logic of Storj? The developers of alpha-stage LBRY believe their

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marketing director Mike Vine – to find out more about their software project.

“LBRY directly connects content producers to consumers and gets out of the way.”

- Jeremy Kauffman

Cointelegraph: What was the inspiration for LBRY?

Jeremy Kauffman: LBRY was inspired by a number of things. It was clearly inspired by Bitcoin – seeing the power of the blockchain in reaching consensus without a central authority. It was also inspired by BitTorrent, which is an absolutely brilliant protocol with an unfortunately flawed incentive structure.

It was inspired by the fact that governments, ISPs, and media companies seem to want to treat their customers as something between supplicants and criminals. It was inspired by AirBnB and Uber in that LBRY empowers small-scale entrepreneurs and increases the efficiency of unused resources.



It was inspired by the love of markets and an appreciation for how they facilitate human flourishing. It is inspired by economics, the Coase theorem, and too much time listening to EconTalk. It is inspired by the awful behavior that the biggest torrent clients demonstrate towards their users.

It is inspired by the fact that there has got to be a better way to find, buy, and sell something as simple as a number.

CT: When did development start?

Kauffman: The first lines of code were written about a year ago, with serious effort for the last six months.

CT: What has been the biggest challenge in development? What about the greatest reward?

Kauffman: One unique difficulty in developing a blockchain-based protocol/application is the difficulty in revising it. Great products are typically created through iteration. But by design, it's nearly impossible to revise a cryptocurrency once it's in the wild. To mitigate this, we're trying to roll out LBRY slowly, as well as have several of its aspects be conventions rather than core properties.

The greatest reward by far is the feeling that you are on to something absolutely huge. The potential to significantly improve the efficiency of sharing information and knowledge and make a buck doing it? Who wouldn't want to wake up to that?



- Jeremy Kauffman, Director

CT: You say the "top-down" model of content distribution is inherently flawed. Why is that?

Kauffman: It's worse for both content producers and consumers. It increases costs as providers must cover significant infrastructure and must in parallel create complex systems for accessing something fundamentally simple (a number). It also degrades consumer experience, as consumers must select between many incomplete providers.

From the perspective of a content producer, they are stuck relying on these middlemen that eat away at profits and take away their control. LBRY directly connects content producers to consumers and gets out of the way.

"The Internet let the cat out of the bag, and LBRY lets the cat earn money posting cute videos of itself playing with a cardboard box."

Mike Vine: The 20th century was an era of centralization – assembly lines, fast food franchises, broadcast media. That makes sense when you're trying to get large numbers of people out of relative poverty. But once we've eaten our 1 billionth Big Mac, we start to look around to see if there's anything a bit healthier and a bit tastier.

In the 1980s, it seems everyone was reasonably content to watch the same five sitcoms and listen to the same five MTV recording artists. With the dawn of the Internet, in contrast, we've come to see that a group of a few thousand people can support an indie TV series or band that really satisfies their particular taste.

The 21st century is about decentralizing – more choices, more control, fewer gatekeepers. The Internet let the cat out of the bag, and LBRY lets the cat earn money posting cute videos of itself playing with a cardboard box.



- Mike Vine, Marketing Director

CT: Which use-case in particular do you believe would be LBRY's "killer app"? Listeners looking for new music? Indie cultists looking for obscure French films? Something else?

Kauffman: We're hesitant to speculate. LBRY is designed to gracefully extend BitTorrent, so at a minimum we expect LBRY to be a better BitTorrent client.

However, we think LBRY will be far more than this and be used in ways we cannot imagine today. All we can say with confidence is LBRY is a fundamentally better way to distribute and access all consumer-oriented information, full stop.

"Artists don't have much of an incentive to make their works available on BitTorrent because there is no built-in payment system."

Vine: LBRY is definitely designed with the independent artist in mind. Unlike BitTorrent, LBRY's protocol actually incentivizes hosts to make available "obscure French indie films," as you say. With BitTorrent, the greater number of people seeding and leeching a file, the faster it goes for everyone. That's bad for obscure works.

LBRY's hosts are motivated by what price people are paying for a given piece of a file, so as long as those indie cultists are willing to pony up a few more credits to get *Un Chien Parlez-vous*, it should remain readily available. Also, artists don't have much of an incentive to make their works available on BitTorrent because there is no built-in payment system.

With LBRY, artists have a turnkey publishing, distribution, and payment platform – all encapsulated in a neat little LBRY name like `lbry://hipstershorts`. Over time, LBRY's killer app will be its lower cost and greater reach than centralized media.

CT: Could the LBRY protocol host entire websites in addition to single pieces of content?

Jimmy Kiselak: Only static content, e.g. pictures and videos. Live streams can also work.



- Jimmy Kiselak, Developer

Kauffman: LBRY is only good at distributing information that is the same for everyone. So it would not work for most modern websites, unless you wanted to send the signal that the content is identical for everyone.

CT: Do you envision content distributors, hosts, or miners being able to make a living by their LBRY work?

Kauffman: The “big five” of media (film, video games, TV, music, and books) see over US\$2 trillion per year. We think LBRY can play a role in the distribution of all of this. This answer is a verbose “Yes!”

“Devoting hard drive space or bandwidth to LBRY is like suddenly filling your car on daily commutes with paying customers who keep to themselves and get out where you tell them. It’s a pretty sweet deal.”

Vine: Not only a living, but that mythical unicorn of the working world: a passive income. Instead of Uber, this is more like a ridesharing app where people can fill empty seats in your car for whichever direction you might be headed. But unlike with human travelers, data is not too picky about where it sits or what route it takes to where it’s going.

So devoting hard drive space or bandwidth to LBRY is like suddenly filling your car on daily commutes with paying customers who keep to themselves and get out where you tell them. It’s a pretty sweet deal.

CT: Do you plan to reach out to the BitTorrent community to invite them to make the switch? Why or why not?

Kauffman: We think LBRY is a better BitTorrent, so absolutely. There is lots of great content released via BitTorrent already and LBRY offers an immediate improvement over this.

CT: How can people get involved while you're in alpha stage?

Kauffman: Number one is to join our list so you can know when we release new versions. If you’re comfortable from the command line, you can apply for an invite code to try out our command line version now.

“[...] if we don’t lay down rules for where data should be and who should be uploading it [...] entrepreneurs will do a far better job of figuring out how to deliver data than any planned system like BitTorrent or IPFS could.”

Vine: We really want to hear from everybody. Are you a coder who wants to look under the hood? Are you an artist who wants to be a part of our initial release promotions? Are you an investor who’s tired of vaporware crypto projects and wants to learn more about this self-funded startup that’s on the verge of public release? Do you think we’re fools, geniuses, or — gasp — boring? We’re on Facebook, Twitter, GitHub, AngelList, and F6S, so don’t be shy.

CT: The IPFS is probably the most similar concept to LBRY right now. Why do you think that incorporating a native blockchain with user payments is superior to IPFS's approach?

Kiselak: LBRY is about distributing data fast, and to do that it needs to be able to handle the fact that not all data is alike. IPFS relies on the same sort of planned sharing incentives as BitTorrent.

We believe that if we don't lay down rules for where data should be and who should be uploading it, but instead create a decentralized market where users directly pay hosts for the data they're downloading, entrepreneurs will do a far better job of figuring out how to deliver data than any planned system like BitTorrent or IPFS could.

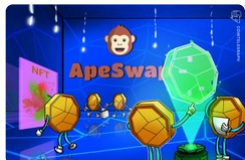
LBRY's teaser:

#Bitcoin #Storj #Software #BitTorrent #Censorship #LBRY #Jeremy Kauffman

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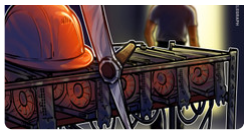
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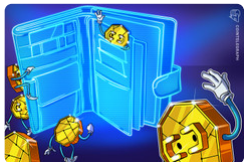
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